

V. Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

Claim 1 recites an apparatus (FIG. 1, element 100; ¶ 0013) for tracking a plurality of containers (¶¶ 0016, 0036), wherein the apparatus is coupled to a status tracking structure (FIG. 1, element 104; ¶ 0013; FIG. 2, elements 270-272; ¶¶ 0029, 0030) that provides event information (¶¶ 0006, 0013) regarding at least a portion of the plurality of containers. In particular, the apparatus comprises an event table (FIG. 3, element 306; ¶ 0035) for storing the event information; a rule execution component (FIG. 2, element 219; ¶ 0019; FIG. 3, element 310; ¶ 0036), constituting at least a portion of a centralized tracking manager (FIG. 1, element 104; FIG. 2, element 210) and coupled to the event table, that processes the event information in accordance with at least one rule (FIG. 3, element 312; ¶ 0036), wherein the at least one rule tests for non-optimal use (¶¶ 0006, 0013) of at least one container of the plurality of containers based on the event information; and a configuration engine component (FIG. 2, element 223; ¶ 0019; FIG. 3, element 316; ¶ 0037), also constituting at least a portion of the centralized tracking manager and coupled to the rule execution component, that causes the rule execution component, without regard to occurrence of the event information and according to at least one user-specified execution frequency (¶¶ 0037-0040; FIG. 4), to process the event information in accordance with at least a portion of the at least one rule.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1 and recites an event engine component, coupled to the status tracking structure and the event table, that receives the event information, stores the event information in the event table and, in response to the receipt of the event information, causes the rule execution component to process the event information in accordance with at least a portion of the at least one rule (FIG. 2, element 229; ¶ 0023; FIG. 3, element 304; ¶¶ 0035, 0036).

Claim 6 depends from claim 1 and recites at least two rules wherein the configuration engine component associates at least two execution frequencies with the at least two rules such

that a portion of the at least two rules is executed with a frequency different from other rules of the at least two rules (FIG. 4, element 402; ¶ 0038).

Claim 9 recites an apparatus (FIG. 1, element 100; ¶ 0013) for tracking a plurality of containers (¶¶ 0016, 0036), wherein the computer architecture is coupled to a status tracking structure (FIG. 1, element 104; ¶ 0013; FIG. 2, elements 270-272; ¶¶ 0029, 0030) that provides event information (¶¶ 0006, 0013) regarding at least a portion of the plurality of containers. In particular, the apparatus comprises an event table (FIG. 3, element 306; ¶ 0035) for storing the event information; a rule storage component (FIG. 2, element 217; ¶ 0016; FIG. 3, element 312; ¶ 0036); a rule execution component (FIG. 2, element 219; ¶ 0019; FIG. 3, element 310; ¶ 0036), constituting at least a portion of a centralized tracking manager (FIG. 1, element 104; FIG. 2, element 210) and coupled to the event table and the rule storage component, that processes the event information in accordance with at least one rule (FIG. 3, element 312; ¶ 0036) stored in the rule storage component, wherein the at least one rule tests for non-optimal use (¶¶ 0006, 0013) of at least one container of the plurality of containers based on the event information and wherein the rule storage component permits modification of any of the at least one rule independent of the rule execution component (¶ 0016); and a configuration engine component (FIG. 2, element 223; ¶ 0019; FIG. 3, element 316; ¶ 0037), also constituting at least a portion of the centralized tracking manager and coupled to the rule execution component, that causes the rule execution component to process the event information in accordance with at least one periodic rule (¶¶ 0017, 0038) of the at least one rule without regard to occurrence of the event information and according to at least one user-specified execution frequency (¶¶ 0037-0040; FIG. 4).

Claim 30 recites a method in a tracking manager (FIG. 1, element 104; FIG. 2, element 210), the tracking manager coupled to a status tracking structure (FIG. 1, element 104; ¶ 0013;

FIG. 2, elements 270-272; ¶¶ 0029, 0030) that provides event information (¶¶ 0006, 0013), regarding at least a portion of a plurality of containers (¶¶ 0006, 0013). In particular, the tracking manager receives the event information (¶ 0023) and processes the event information in accordance with rules of at least one rule that are evaluated regardless of occurrence of the event information and according to at least one user-specified execution frequency (¶¶ 0037-0040; FIG. 4), wherein the at least one rule tests for non-optimal use (¶¶ 0006, 0013) of at least one container of the plurality of containers based on the event information.

Claim 62 depends from claim 1 and further recites wherein the at least one rule determines whether at least one empty container of the plurality of containers has been allowed to sit for greater than a period of time (¶ 0016).

Claim 63 depends from claim 1 and further recites wherein the at least one rule determines whether at least two partially-full containers of the plurality of containers have been dispatched to a destination within a period of time (¶ 0016).

Claim 64 depends from claim 1 and further recites wherein the at least one rule determines whether a given container of the plurality of containers is less than half full prior to loading of the container on a vehicle (¶ 0036).

Claim 65 depends from claim 1 and further recites wherein the at least one rule determines whether two containers of the plurality of containers are less than ninety percent full when combined (¶ 0036).